



# *News From MAIENstreet*

## **A Neighborhood Newsletter From Councilman Brian Maienschein**



February 2005

Volume 5 Issue 2

Proudly Representing the  
District Five  
Communities of:

*Carmel Mountain Ranch*

*Mira Mesa*

*Rancho Bernardo*

*Sabre Springs*

*San Pasqual*

*Scripps Ranch*

*Sorrento Mesa*

*Sorrento Valley*

## **Maienschein Announces Plan to Replace City's Employee Pension Plan**

On February 7, 2005, I called for a complete replacement of the City's problem-riddled, archaic pension system with a plan that will prevent these serious problems from ever occurring again. I have been frustrated with the grandstanding that has been done by some and the complete silence and lack of solutions from others. Pointing fingers will not help solve the problems facing the system. Neither will sitting and doing nothing. I am optimistic that a solution can be implemented in an efficient, deliberate manner.

My plan would replace the current system. I proposed implementing a defined contribution plan, which would give employees more flexibility to control assets, enhance credit standing, move assets and pass along remaining funds to heirs. At the same time, this type of system would benefit the City by reducing long-term costs and providing greater budget predictability. Examples of defined contribution plans include 401(K) plans and employee stock ownership plans.

I am proposing this plan as the City begins its negotiations with the labor unions. The unions will have the opportunity to discuss the merits. I am hopeful they will agree that it will be beneficial to replace the old system.

Currently, the City uses a defined benefit approach. Retirement benefits under this system are provided according to a formula, generally based on age, years of service and salary level. Employees are guaranteed a fixed amount of money upon retirement, even if the investment market performs poorly. This system requires the City to, in essence, act as an insurer of a rate of return. This is too risky.

Now that we've made important improvements to the existing system, and labor negotiations for the next year are about to begin, the timing is perfect to adopt an entirely new pension plan. That is why I have called on the Mayor and my fellow Councilmembers to support my proposal, which would apply to new employees beginning in fiscal 2006.

My experience reversing decades-old budgeting practices while chair of the City Council's public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee is the basis of my confidence that pension fund stability can be restored if tough decisions are made. I'm hopeful that a new 21st century pension structure will indeed be put in place. A new pension plan will help taxpayers and ultimately save the City's pension system.

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## Groundbreaking for Camino Ruiz Park in Mira Mesa

I am so proud to have celebrated the groundbreaking for Camino Ruiz Park on January 14, 2005. This project is a perfect example of how local neighbors and the community, even with different wants and needs, came together to create such a huge success.



Councilmember Maienschein helps break ground on the Camino Ruiz Park in Mira Mesa. Also pictured are Joe Frichtel, chair of the Mira Mesa Recreation Council, and Ellen Oppenheim, director of the City's Park & Recreation Department.

We created a subcommittee to ensure fairness and made sure that everyone from the neighborhood and the community had the opportunity to give creative input. We began this project approximately two years ago, and after many, many late night meetings, we created a win-win situation for everyone and the result will be a park that we really can be proud of.

Not only will this 11-acre park come with all the great amenities like baseball and soccer fields for our kids, it is also one of the best parks to incorporate the magnificent surroundings of the Los Penasquitos Preserve.

There will be four scenic preserve outlook posts at the park. This park even has a petanque (pronounced pay-tonk) court...I have no idea what that is, but I am going to learn to play it now!! We expect to open this park by this fall.

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## Donations Help Keep Rancho Bernardo Beautiful

Generous donations from local businesses and the community have provided much needed financial support to the Rancho Bernardo Maintenance Assessment District which lacks necessary funding after a community ballot measure failed last year. Approximately \$30,000 in combined donations from Vons, the Wiekel Family and other community members have allowed for the continuation of many of the neighborhood services that were temporarily cut due to the funding shortage.

The Maintenance Assessment District (MAD) provides services such as sidewalk sweeping, maintaining street medians and public right-of-ways and street median lighting. Each homeowner is assessed a small annual fee to cover the cost of these services which are not provided by the City. The current assessment for Rancho Bernardo is approximately \$7 a year and has not increased for several years.

Due to the rising costs of water and labor, it was necessary to increase the assessment to pay for existing services. The ballot measure to increase the assessment failed largely due to opposition from large commercial property owners. The failure led to a funding shortage of approximately \$40,000. As a result, many of the services the MAD provides were reduced.

Though the community is hopeful that another ballot effort in the upcoming months will bring about different results, in the meantime, these generous donations will greatly help keep Rancho Bernardo clean and beautiful.

## Maienschein Announces Plan to Help Reduce Speeding

On January 28, 2005, I kicked off an important traffic calming project designed to help reduce speeding on neighborhood streets in Scripps Ranch. I turned on the first of 12 electronic speed monitor signs planned for locations throughout the community. The first sign was installed on Scripps Ranch Boulevard, near the entrance to the new Overlook Park. The entrance is located near the top of a hill and I hope the sign will remind drivers to slow down and pay particular attention to those turning into the park.

Unfortunately, problems with drivers speeding throughout neighborhoods is too common. I am so proud to be a part of this important project, which will truly make headway in the effort to keep our community safe.

The signs operate on solar power. As speeding drivers approach the device, their speed flashes on an electronic monitor. If drivers are not speeding, the sign displays the speed limit.

Locations for the 11 other signs were selected based on a number of factors, including whether there was a history of complaints about speeding, as well as proximity to schools and areas where children play.



Pictured from left to right: Bill Bernard, chair of the Miramar Ranch North Planning Committee, Councilmember Maienschein and Robert Ilko, chair of the Scripps Ranch Planning Group.

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## Maienschein Celebrates Opening of Overlook Park



Pictured from left to right on top row: Kim Elliot, of McMillan Land Development; Councilmember Maienschein holding daughter, Taylin; Mayor Dick Murphy; Ellen Oppenheim, director of the City's Park & Recreation Department; and Bill Bernard of the Miramar Ranch North Planning Committee.

Of all the parks in San Diego, the new Overlook Park in Scripps Ranch has one of the best views! The park overlooks Miramar Lake and on a clear day, you can see distant views of Coronado and Point Loma. The 1.7-acre park at 11417 Scripps Ranch Boulevard features a playground with a play structure, swings and see-saw; three shade structures; seven picnic tables; three benches, a parking lot with 20 spaces and a restroom.

On Saturday, February 5, 2005, I helped celebrate the opening of this beautiful new park. I was joined by Mayor Dick Murphy, Ellen Oppenheim, director of the Park & Recreation Department; Bill Bernard, chair of the Miramar Ranch North Planning Committee; and Kim Elliot, vice president of McMillan Land Development, the company that built the park for the City.



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**<http://www.sandiego.gov/city-council/district-5>**

From my website, you can also sign up to receive **e-News from MAIENstreet** every month via e-mail.

It's a pleasure to serve you on the San Diego City Council!